

WASHINGTON, D.C. The House Appropriations Committee has approved funding for four transportation-related community development projects in southwest Georgia, U.S. Representative Sanford Bishop announced Friday (7/25).

The Second District Congressman, a member of the committee, said the Transportation Appropriations Bill approved by the panel for the new fiscal year starting October 1 includes funding for: the multimodal transportation center in Albany; the multimodal transportation center in Leesburg; the “Streetscape” revitalization project in Moultrie, and the regional transit system in Clay, Quitman, Randolph and Stewart counties.

Although less revenue is available for community transportation projects this year than in many previous years, Southwest Georgia fared relatively well compared to other areas of the country, Representative Bishop pointed out. He said communities requested billions of dollars in transportation needs, but only a small fraction of that was available for budgeting.

“I’m pleased that our area of Georgia has secured its share of the available transportation funding, and then some,” he said. “But,” he added, “we have other transportation needs in southwest Georgia that also deserve priority consideration, and we’re going to keep working to get the funding for all of our area’s needs as soon as possible.”

The Congressman said the Transportation Appropriations Bill reported out by the committee, which is now pending consideration by the entire U.S. House, includes the following:

\$2 million for the Albany Multimodal Transportation Center to be developed at a downtown city-owned parking site, providing a center for city buses, long distance buses, charter buses, taxis, passenger rail support services, and support services for commercial and retail businesses.

\$400,000 for the Leesburg Multimodal Transportation Center, where the renovated rail depot will serve as a center for a variety of community services.

\$300,000 for the Moultrie “Streetscape” project, a part of a massive downtown revitalization program.

\$1 million for a Regional Transit Demonstration Project, to establish and expand transit services in a program jointly serving Clay, Quitman, Randolph and Stewart counties.

Representative Bishop said the economic slump and previous tax cuts have left the federal government with substantially less revenue to meet its priority budget needs. As a result, he noted, many federal programs are experiencing budget cuts. Under these circumstances, he said, the overall funding level for transportation is adequate. However, he added that many critical needs are not being met, and he continues to urge Congress to scale back this year’s \$350 billion tax cut plan in the highest income brackets to provide the revenue needed to meet the most critical of these needs.